

Bush's Disavowal of Vice Presidential Hopes Urged as Confirmation Condition

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WASHINGTON—Two Democratic presidential aspirants urged Tuesday that George Bush be removed from vice presidential consideration as a condition for Senate confirmation as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

But the two disagreed on the mechanics of the removal.

One of them, Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), said that President Ford, who nominated Bush to the CIA post, should disavow him as a potential 1976 running mate.

The other, Sen. Frank Church (D-Ida.), said that Bush himself should make the disavowal.

Jackson and Church presented their views as the Senate Armed Services Committee concluded hearings on the Bush nomination.

The committee is expected to recommend his confirmation, possibly today. Bush critics on the 16-man committee said that they had little hope of blocking the nomination but predicted that the vote could be close.

Committee approval would clear the way for action on the nomination by the full Senate, where opposition is expected to be stronger. As a consequence, with Congress working overtime in an effort to adjourn for the holidays by Friday, a Senate vote on the nomination is not expected until January.

The opposition to Bush stems largely from his service as Republican national chairman during the closing months of the Nixon administration; his close friendship with President Ford and his refusal Monday to rule out accepting an offer of the vice presidential nomination next year.

"President Ford has put you in a very awkward and embarrassing position," Jackson, a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, told Bush. "President Ford should state that he will not put you on the 1976 ticket."

Both Jackson, an announced presidential candidate, and Church, who is expected to announce his candidacy shortly, questioned whether a man with vice presidential hopes could be expected to show the objectivity and independence that they said a CIA director should have.

Church, chairman of the Senate select committee that investigated the CIA and other intelligence agencies, said Bush as CIA director would be "hopelessly compromised" unless he disavowed any vice presidential offer.

"We expect too much of human nature if we don't recognize what the response of the director would be if the promise of higher political office is dangled before his eyes," Church said.

At a time when he and others are trying to restore public confidence in the CIA, Church said, a director is needed "with shown ability to stand up to the President."

While praising Bush as a man of "demonstrated ability" whom he could support for almost any other office, Church said he has never known Bush "to take serious issue with the President on any issue."

Sen. John G. Tower (R-Tex.), a member of the Armed Services Committee and cochairman of Church's intelligence committee, sought to assist Bush, a fellow Texan, by drawing a parallel between Bush's political problems and Church's presidential ambitions.

Remarking with a smile that "some press people have been calling our committee 'the Church for President Committee,'" Tower asked of Church:

"Wouldn't our committee have more credibility if you foreswore being President?"

Church, showing some irritation, retorted that if he decided to run for President "I would step down as chairman."

Bush, who sat in the audience during Church's testimony, listened intently to Church's frequently critical remarks and at times appeared to flush with anger.

Returning to the witness table after Church departed, Bush said that he shared Church's concern about restoring confidence in the CIA and that he thought he had demonstrated the character and integrity to accomplish that goal.

Bush said further that he believed he had "demonstrated independence" when as Republican national chairman he had urged then President Richard M. Nixon to resign because of the Watergate scandals.

Agreeing, Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) said he had been in almost hourly contact with Bush when Nixon was considering resigning and that Bush "was the first man to my knowledge to let the President know he should go."

As the hearings concluded, two Democratic committee members—Sens. John C. Culver (D-Iowa) and Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) announced that they would vote against Bush for the CIA post. They said they would have backed him for almost any other federal position.